

This is for

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Recd

31.8.67

YOU  
who are called the  
**Cornon-VVealths-Men**  
both in the  
**A R M Y**  
and  
**P A R L I A M E N T**  
To Read.

Wherein are many plain and true things declared unto you (which are suitable to your present estate and condition) that that ye may consider them in the same that they are sent unto you in, which is in Truth, and in sincerity, and singlenesse and uprightness of heart, in that love which thinks no evil, even in obedience unto the spirit of the Lord, which also saith, Try all things, and hold fast that which is good.

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Given forth by George Fox the younger.

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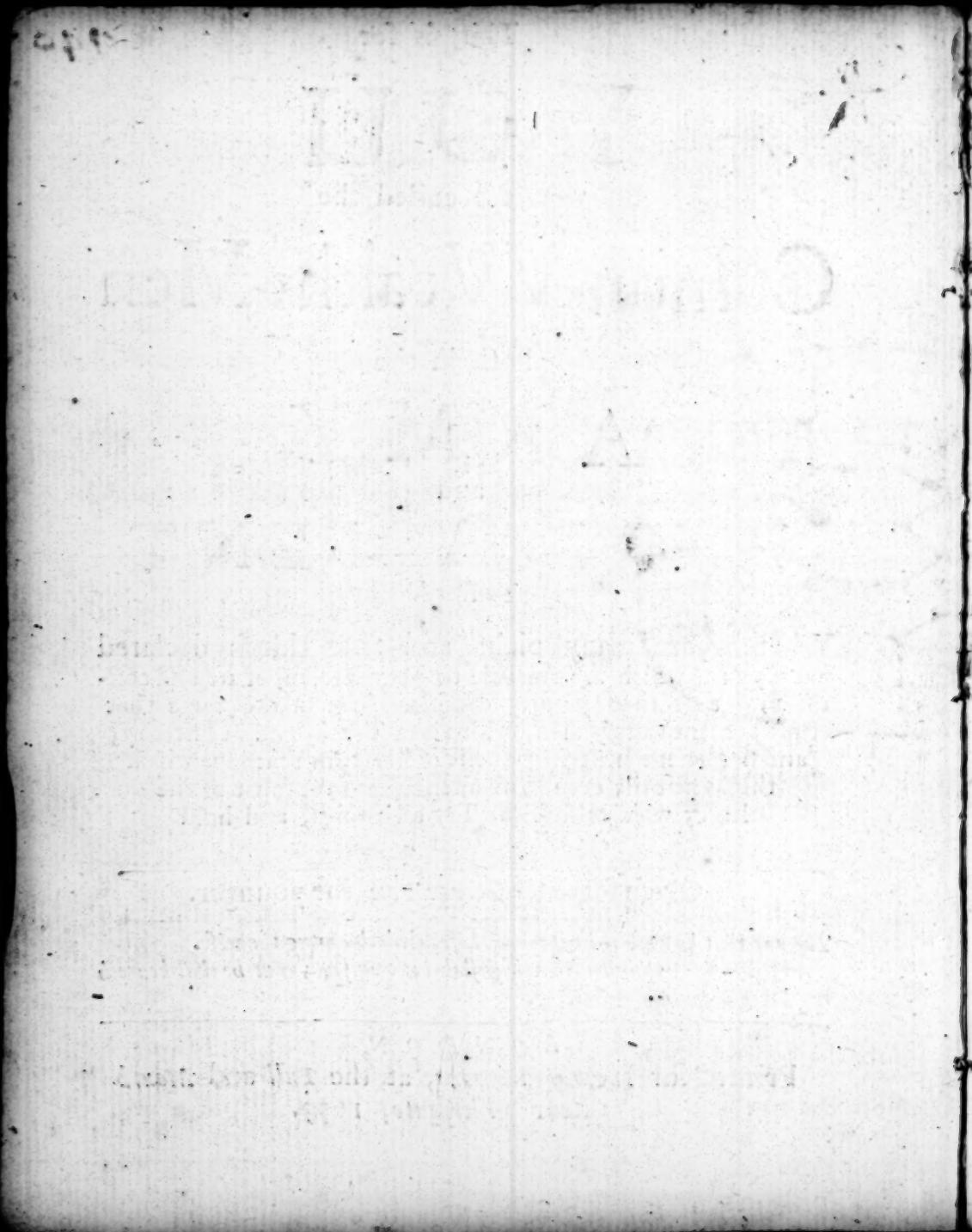
*The ear that beareth the reproof of Life, abideth among the wise.*

*He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; But he that beareth reproof, getteth understanding.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for Thomas Simmons, at the Bull and Mouth  
near Aldersgate, 1659.



To them who are called the Common-<sup>\* Neathes-men,</sup>  
in the Army and Parliament to read.



### FRIENDS.

**I**N several of you I know there hath stirred, and doth oft stir a pure, true living principle of God, which hath begot, (and doth beget) true, honest and upright desires, and breathings in you after righteousness, true liberty and freedom, (and loathings of oppression and Tyranny) and it hath been in the hearts of some of you, & much upon you to break down oppression and tyranny, and to remove oppressors, and to make void all such laws as makes provision for tyranny and oppression, whereby the oppressors hath long been strengthened in their oppressing the people of this Nation; and some of you have felt the weight and burthen of oppression and tyranny, (under which the innocent suffers) and it hath been much in your hearts to set up righteous lawes, whereby all people might have equity and justice idone to them, and for them, by such as you have had thoughts to put in authority, which would do just and equal things between man and man, without respect to persons.

These things the Lords witnesse (in you) hath shewed unto you, that they ought to be done by you, and some of you have breathed and desired much to do these things, when ye have owned the pure movings and stirrings of the measure of the life and power of God (in you) which hath stirred and moved (in you) towards righteousness, equity, mercy, and justice; But hitherto ye have been much hindred in this work.

And truly Friends, there are many things yet remaining in and among you, (Mark that) which hinders and stops you in this work of true reformation, and they will stop you therein (Mark that) so long as they bear rule in and among you, and are consented to (and regarded) by you, many of those things are as followeth.

*First, There are many that pretends that they are of you,*

(Mark that) which hath joyned unto you in some outward appearance; but it is more for fear of losing their places, and the riches and honour of this World, then for love to the cause of equity, Justice and true liberty; And these are in the Priests nature, who for covetousnesse, and self-ends, can change with the times, and governments, and pretend they are for them (so long as they will hold them up) and such are neither true to God, nor their Countrey; for they can lay down their Religion, which they have pretended to stand for, and deny the Cause of their Countrey, if it will make most for their own gain, and then say, It was the Lords doing, and they are satisfied in it, though it be quite contrary to that which they have formerly contended for; and of this sort there are many among you which stops the work you ought to do.

And several of you also, in whom the Truth of God have stirred against oppression and tyranny, verily your mindes are yet so much in your Commissions and places, and in the love, and honour, and wisdom of this World, that this stops you in the work ye ought to do. And some of you have so many Relations, mark that, that have such a great gain, in those very things which greatly oppressthe people of this Nation; and also some of your selves are concerned in these things, that so ye cannot tell how to take away oppression wholly, without taking away their and your own gain; and these things being looked at by you, they exceedingly stops you in the work you ought to do; because herein private self-ends, and respect to persons, by you is preferred before the general good of all.

Now Friends, whilst your mindes, and thoughts and hearts runs into, or after any of these things, They (with the enemy of your souls) will not suffer you to do that which is equall, no further (to be sure) then will stand safe for the upholding and prefering of your Relations, and your own private, particular self-ends.

Therefore all wait in that which is pure and living of God, in you, which will shew you all deceit, if ye keep to it, that so by it your mindes may be redeemed out of all self, and re-

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spect to persons, that so all particular private self ends, and respect to persons, may be denied, and utterly trampled upon by you, and that the general good and freedom of all, without respect of persons, may be minded and acted for, by you, that so ye may serve the Lord God, and your generation in singlenesse and uprightnesse of heart, and then the Lord will honour you, and he will be your sufficient reward.

Verily it is a mighty thing, and it is highly to be prized by you, especially ye of the Army, that ever the Lord God should make use of you again, and again put an opportunity into your hands, to do that which you formerly promised and vowed unto the Lord [and your Nation] to do, seeing ye so slighted (*Mark that*) the former opportunities which the Lord God gave you, and acted so treacherously and deceitfully as ye did in your backslidings; and if ye should slight this opportunity also, do not expect another, (be not deceived, God will not be mocked) Therefore, consider these things, and mind to answer the Lords love yet continued unto you.

But if ye look out at, or suffer your minds to run into, (*Mark*) the greatness of your places, or after your gain, or the honour of the World; or if ye look out at love or hatred of your pretended Friends or known enemies, or at any particular self-end whatsoever; These things will strangle the principle of God in you, which moves to do that which is equal and just unto all, and then the tender seed in you which feels the weight and burthen of oppression that will be ministered; and then deadnesse and hardnesse of heart will come upon you more and more, and ye will settle deeper and deeper in the death; and verily, if ye should do thus, ye would become even as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* unto the Lord, and he would overturn you with a great and mighty destruction (as he did them) Therefore remember you have been warned.

So look at none of these things, but look ye to the Lord God; and mind the movings of his life [in you] and be obedient thereto, and as oppression, and tyranny and injustice is made manifest unto you [by the light of the Lord in you] in the power of the Lord committed unto you, break it down and overturn it, and set up and establish righteous laws, equity, mer-

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444 cy, and Justice, and true liberty in its place, and then you need not fear what man can do unto you, for the Lord would then be your preserver.

So the Lord God hath once more tryed you; Now if you love Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Houses, Lands, Commissions, Honours of the World, or any particular self-end whatsoever more then the Work of the Lord, or if ye prefer any of them so as thereby to stop the Lords Work, or if ye do the Lords work negligently (which he hath once more put into your hands) verily ye shall not be counted worthy to be the Lords workmen.

So remember *Saul* (who was made an example that others might take warning) who slew but part, (of that which was to be destroyod) and saved a part alive, and therein he was stubborn and disobedient; Now if ye should destroy but part of the Tyranny and oppression which is utterly to be destroyed, [Mark that] and preserve part of it, take heed least the Lord rent ye from your places for your stubbornesse, and disobedience, as he rent *Saul* from his Kindom, for his.

Therefore awake, awake, and wait in the light, to feel the Lords strength, that therein your zeal and courage for him may be renewed, and linger not in things as ye have done, but dwell in the power of the Lord, (ye who have felt it, and do not abuse it, or resist it any longer) and in his power act for the freedom and just liberty of all his Creatures, and this will bring honour unto the Lord, that so ye in whose hearts there is a singlenesse, an honesty and an uprightness unto the Lord, (may keep your selves from being defiled with the corruptnesse of others) and so be preserved in his wisdom and power, in the breakings, overturnings, or purgings, and separating, that yet must be in the Nation.

And Freinds in the Army, when will the spirit of Righteousnesse and equity be clearly manifested among you, to Rule you thus, that so long as ye bear an outward sword, it might be onely turned against evil doers, and not for the upholding any oppression whatsoever, but for the breaking down of all oppression and Tyranny wheresoever it is found, and for keeping

keeping the outward peace, whilst equal and just Laws be established, whereby the just liberties and outward freedom of the Nation might be enjoyed; and not to make a trade of using your swords to enrich your selves by them; by heaping up outward riches, and to feed your lusts; But whilst ye use your swords, to be content with such wages, as might but even finde you things necessary and convenient for your places?

Now if this spirit lead you, then self-denial will be manifested in you indeed, and they that called you a mercenary Army, then should be ashamed; for if tyranny and oppression were destroyed, and equity, true outward liberty and freedom were established, and the enemies of it so brought to nought, that so there were no need of you, this spirit if it ruled you, would make you as freely wiling then, to lay down your places and swords, as ever any of you were made free to take them up; and then to fall upon improving the Creation in the fear and wisdom of the Lord, and to be content to enjoy an equal proportion & share of the liberty (with your fellow-creatures) which you have fought for; and if it were thus, then ye might truly be called the Common wealths-men, or servants.

But if ye carry a sword, and expect and desire still to carry or uphold a sword, to make a trade of (mark that) then I know you will not utterly bring down oppressors, and oppression, and firmly establish outward liberty, though yee could, least your trade should fall; Now if you do not act singly for your Nations good (and stand out of all self ends whatsoever) but still continue, making a trade of using your swords, then you cannot truly be called the Common-wealths Servants; but such as serves your selves, and such as are their masters, though you receive wages of them.

And Friends, there are many things done lately in the name of the keepers of the liberty of *England*; Now (Mark.) ye should first make *England* a Free Nation, and set it at liberty from all its oppression and bondage that it is in [ before ye take such a name upon you] and then in the fear and wisdom of the Lord, see to preserve and keep its liberty, and then ye might truly be called the keepers of the liberty of *England*, but if ye do not first set it at liberty, and then keep it, and yet  
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be called the keepers of the liberty of it, ye will be but like unto those which had a name that they lived, and yet were dead, and like the false Christians who are puffed up with a name, but are out of the nature which belongs to the name.

This from me, who have a tender love going forth unto all, both in Parliament, Army and others, who have any true breathings or desires (in them) after Righteousnesse, Truth, Equity, Mercy, Justice and true Judgement (which I wait to see set up and established;) And I honour the higher power, and am subject thereunto, where ever, or in whomsoever it doth appear, which Power hath made me a Watch-man unto you, to warn you, and to watch for your souls, and for peace; And in obeying this Power, I am clear of, and free from the blood of all men.

G. Fjæn.

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